

Workers at two more factories join sit-ins

By Ronald Kershaw

Another 650 workers at two factories in the Manchester area yesterday joined the series of north-west sit-ins in the engineering pay dispute. They are Archibald Edmeston of Eccles and Francis Shaw of Openshaw.

A spokesman for the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers said last night that this latest action brought the total of men either sitting in or locked out at north west companies to between 17,000 and 18,000. The majority, he said, were sitting in. The only lock out had occurred at GEC/AEI at Trafford Park, where 3,500 men were involved.

Where sit-ins were being operated the men had organized themselves into three, four or five shifts to keep a substantial number of men at the works round the clock. In fact, said the union spokesman, sit-ins were not directly connected with the pay claim.

The spokesman said employers had brought matters to a head. The

men had banned overtime, operated a work-to-rule, and put an embargo on piecework.

The employers maintained that refusal to do piecework in favour of ordinary day working did not constitute normal working and had threatened to lock the men out.

Nearly 200,000 men in the area are now operating some form of work restriction

500 redundant: More than 500 workers, one-third of the factory's staff, are to lose their jobs at GEC Elliott Automation at Kidsgrove, Staffordshire. The workers involved are members of four unions and their redundancies are to be phased over a number of months.

Chemical pay claim: Union leaders of 400,000 chemical workers yesterday submitted a pay claim for "substantial increases" in earnings. The pay claim comes as a further embarrassment to Imperial Chemical Industries. ICI has argued that business results do not favour a wage settlement before September.

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